



# Housing Typology

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**“Allow the construction of a variety of housing types to fit the needs and desires of the full spectrum of citizens.”<sup>2</sup>**



Figure 1: Example of single-detached house that could be modified for accessibility.

There are many things to consider when exploring housing options as a senior. Affordability and location are at the top of that list when determining whether to stay in place or consider a move. Seniors have access to more housing options than ever before but there is still an imbalance of what is offered when considering the varied needs of seniors. With Canada’s rapidly aging population, housing will be in great demand. Statistics Canada projects that by 2030 one quarter of the population in Canada will be age 65 and older. In Manitoba, it is projected that the population of people age 65 and older will reach twenty percent by 2038.<sup>3</sup> As such, more Canadians than ever will be facing retirement housing decisions. Offering a selection of housing types will allow seniors to opportunity to decide what will work for them in their desired location.<sup>10</sup>

## Age-friendly housing

When building new houses or housing complexes it is in everyones best interest to design with a standard of accessibility. **The Universal Design** principles allows anyone, of any age or of any ability to access spaces with ease. When using the principles in constructing new or modifying current housing can allow residents to age in place or have more options if needing to move.<sup>4,10</sup>

## Stay In Home

A 2014 report released by the National Seniors Council of Canada stated 85% of Canadians over the age of 55 would like to remain in their home as they age.<sup>9</sup> This can be most cost effective depending on the level of care required. The owner is financially responsible for all repairs and maintenance. Other costs could include home care, personal care, housekeeping/ housing support and **making modifications to accommodate changes in mobility and medical needs.**

## Single-Detached House

Current singles detached homes could be modified to allow the resident to stay in place as they age (fig. 1). Being able to stay in place adds a level of comfort with familiarity of surroundings and neighbourhood.<sup>2</sup> This option has a higher level of independence and access to a good support system is beneficial. Isolation could be a factor if the neighbourhood is not accessible, limited support system available or limited services for the senior population in the area.<sup>9</sup>



Photo Credit: Global News

Figure 2: Repurposing single family home into shared housing concept in Winnipeg, MB. for older women.



Photo Credit: Riverview Condos

Figure 3: Single level condo complex for easier access. Riverview Condos, Swan River, MB.

## Multi-unit Housing: Independent Living

Multi-unit housing tends to have a wide range of types and can be owned or rental units. There are some that are market, subsidized or government run. Cost is dependent on the size of units, amenities and service available. Suites remain as private spaces and are often designed or retrofitted to meet the needs of senior residents. There may be access to on-site services (i.e. a shared meal room, activity center, medical services and transportation).<sup>1</sup> Multi-unit housing benefits those who may be looking to move into a smaller space but are still able to maintain their independence.

**55+ complexes** are designated for people age 55 and older. **Life Leases** are a tenure conditional housing where you pay a larger fee up front with monthly maintenance payments. **Cooperatives (Co-op)** are another form of tenure conditional housing but the organizations tend to be non-profit. **Home Share** is when two or more people share a property but each person retains a private space. The housing is usually privately owned and the accommodations include a private room but all other areas of the dwelling are shared commons space. A monthly fee is paid and covers the cost of the living space and may cover amenities such as transportation and meal costs.

The **Woman's Housing Initiative Manitoba** (fig. 2) in Winnipeg, Manitoba is a home share co-op for older women. Residents remain fully independent but they may have access to support from others sharing the space.<sup>6</sup> Cost can be less than other options but residents may still have to pay for home care services. **Cohousing** are multiple private dwellings or units that have shared common space. The complexes are similar to co-ops or condo ownership with the differences being the residents own the condo and a share of the common spaces (fig. 3). The owners decide on what amenities the complex will incorporate into the commons space design, offering anything from woodshops, exercise facility, parking garage, and outdoor spaces.<sup>1</sup>

**Wolf Willow Cohousing** in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan is an exclusively senior living 21 unit cohousing complex (fig. 4). The residents are made up of couples

**Universal design creates housing that can work for everyone. Allowing people to stay in their home as circumstances change.<sup>4</sup>**



Photo Credit: Wolf Willow

Figure 4: Wolf Willow Cohousing is a 21 unite building in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Figure 5: Mid-size assisted living seniors complex.



Photo Credit: Catherine House

Figure 6: Activity room at Catherine Place. Allowing residents space to socialize.



Photo Credit: Catherine House

**“Living with other people is not only merely affordable, the socializing aspect helps deter isolation.”<sup>6</sup>**

and single men and women. It is located close to parks, bike paths and recreational facilities. The commons space has a fully equipped kitchen, commons area and entertainment space.<sup>11</sup> Cohousing can be on the higher end of senior housing as residents may still have to pay for home care, housekeeping or any other extra assisted services needed.

### **Assisted Living: Semi-Independent**

Assisted living facilities tend to be multi-unit building and designed for those who may need some daily assistance but are still relatively independent. Cost is dependant on the size of suites and level of care required.<sup>1</sup> Suites remain as private spaces and are often designed or modified to meet the needs of senior residents (fig. 5).<sup>5</sup> There is access to on-site services, such as, personal care or housekeeping. Often there are regular recreational activities, entertainment, scheduled financial services, transportation options and a shared meal space (fig. 6). Access to on-site amenities, like hairstylist and convenience store are also commonly an included feature.<sup>1</sup> Residents are generally as independent as they desire to be. There may be less freedom in the living space, for example, residents may not be able to paint or remodel and may not be able to keep a pet.<sup>2</sup>

### **Residential Care/ Nursing Homes: Dependant Living**



Photo Credit: Winnipeg Free Press

Figure 7: Deer Lodge Centre all inclusive health care facility in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

These are community care living and tend to be mid to high rise buildings intended for those who are unable to live independently. Living space may be private or shared. Residents are those who require a higher level of care.<sup>1</sup> Places like the **Deer Lodge Centre** (Fig. 7) offer 24 hours access to medical professionals, prepared meals, personal care, planned recreational and social activities. They are more comparable to a hospital setting with visiting hours and residents are placed in specific units based on their medical needs.<sup>7</sup> The cost of these facilities are covered in Manitoba but may have fees for extra services. These facilities can lower the risk of isolation due to less independence and provide full care services.



## Final Thoughts

A variety of housing types available for the aging population will allow them to choose if they can age in place or move to a place that is suitable to meet their needs. There will need to be large effort from all levels of government, advocates, developers and most of all seniors to ensure accessibility and affordability is available to all. Increase to the housing stock will allow seniors to live independently longer.

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